DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 377 986 PS 022 952

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TITLE From Risk to Resilience: A Journey with Heart for Our Children, Our Future.
REPORT NO ISBN-1-56374-017-6
PUB DATE 94
NOTE 169p.; Introduction by Bonnie Benard.
AVAILABLE FROM Marco Polo Publishers, 17194 Preston Road, Suite 123, Dallas, TX 75248-1203 ($15, plus $3.25 postage; Texas residents must add sales tax, discount on quantity orders).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120) -- Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Adolescents; Alienation; *At Risk Persons; *Change Strategies; Children; *Community Role; Elementary Secondary Education; *Family Role; Modeling (Psychology); Parent Role; *Risk; Role Models; Social Services; *Youth Problems
IDENTIFIERS Anomie Theory; *Resilience (Personality); Risk Reduction; Self Empowerment; Vulnerability

ABSTRACT

This book offers the perspective that healthy child development results from family, school, and community environments that support and elicit the innate resiliency--or "self-righting mechanisms"--within every person. The book draws on and integrates several fields of research that support the movement in emphasis from risk to resiliency in education and human services. It makes a case for moving beyond a pathology approach that focuses on the deficits of children and families, to an empowerment perspective that concentrates on and engages their strengths. The first section of the book describes the nature and origins of vulnerability and risk for children in our society. It details the outer and inner worlds of childhood today in response to two powerful forces producing the greatest vulnerability in the highest number of young people in any society to date: alienation and anomie. The second section discusses the nature of resilience. It is an examination of specific observations and discoveries related to the notion of what helps children beat the odds and overcome adversity. It includes a variety of suggested strategies and tactics taken from research. The last section focuses on the role that adults play in fostering resilience in children. Noting that 95 percent of all human learning is based upon modeling, this section describes the manner by which adults can retain their own resiliency and model it effectively for children and adolescents. The book concludes with a bibliography of 45 items and 4 appendices, which include examination of risk factors and recommendations for parents, educators, and community leaders. (TJQ)

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